

“Running the Race”

Caring for the vulnerable – 1 Timothy 5:3-16

God’s care for the vulnerable

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,
is God in his holy dwelling. (Psalm 68:5)

1. The church should help those who are really in need

“The widow who is really in need and left all alone” (v.5)

“No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty” (v.9)

“...puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.” (v.5)

“...has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds”
(v.9-10)

2. Families should do their best to care for their own who are in need

“But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.” (v.4)

3. Those in need should still seek to live wisely for Christ

“As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list” (v.11)

“So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander.” (v.14)

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Digging Deeper questions for small group discussion & personal reflection

God's care for the vulnerable

When we have a care for those who are vulnerable, how we reflect the heart of God?

1. The church should help those who are really in need

When someone presents a particular need that they have, what things do you consider when weighing up the support you can offer?

When you come across someone who seems to have a desperate need, do you click into 'rescuer' mode? Why do you do this? Have you been frustrated that you've not necessarily been able to 'fix' the problem?

Why is it important that in helping others we encourage them to put their "hope in God" (v.5) rather than over-relying on us?

In what way is church life about 'give' and 'take'? Why should we be wary about continually supporting those who don't seem to show Christian love & service towards other believers?

2. Families should do their best to care for their own who are in need

In what ways might Christians need to care for their own family members? Have you ever needed to do this?

Why is this sort of care "pleasing to God" (v.4)?

When we feel we have come to the end of our resources in helping our own family, what should we do?

3. Those in need should still seek to live wisely for Christ

Is there a danger sometimes that we can make excuses for our poor choices by blaming our circumstances? How can we guard against this, and stay faithful to Christ?